



State of Utah
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

Michael O. Leavitt
Governor

Ted Stewart
Executive Director

James W. Carter
Division Director

355 West North Temple
3 Triad Center, Suite 350
Salt Lake City, Utah 84180-1203
801-538-5340
801-359-3940 (Fax)
801-538-5319 (TDD)

December 1, 1993

Mr. Gary Gamble
Hecla Mining Company
6500 Mineral Drive
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83814

Re: Conditional Approval, Amendment to Tailings impoundment Reclamation Plan, Hecla Mining Company, Escalante Silver Mine, M/021/004, Iron County, Utah

Dear Mr. Gamble:

On November 5, 1993, the Division received your latest response to our October 25, 1993, 2nd tentative approval of your reclamation design plan for the Escalante Silver Mine Tailings Impoundment. We have also received and reviewed your October 18, 1993, response letter to the Bureau of Land Management. Your latest response indicates that Hecla Mining Company is willing to accept some of our October 25th tentative approval conditions, with minor changes. The following constitutes our understanding of Hecla's latest design commitments:

CAPILLARY BARRIER/COVER

The latest proposed design includes:

1. A commitment to make a compactive effort on the surface of the tailings, but no guarantee to meet a compaction/permeability performance standard of 1.0 E-6 cm/sec;
2. a 6-inch waste rock layer (capillary barrier) applied over the tailings;
3. a 12-inch subsoil layer applied over the capillary barrier; and
4. a 6-inch topsoil layer applied on top of the subsoil layer.

Following recent consultation with the BLM staff regarding your latest responses, and the receipt of a November 8, 1993 letter from the Division of Water Quality, we are prepared to grant final approval of the reclamation proposal provided Hecla agrees to accept the following design change conditions:



Page 2

Mr. Gary Gamble

M/021/004

December 1, 1993

APPROVAL CONDITIONS:

1. The capillary waste rock layer must remain at the previously proposed 10-inch average thickness. A 6-inch thickness is not acceptable to the regulatory agencies.
2. The total combined thickness of the subsoil and topsoil layers must equal 24-inches (18-inches subsoil, 6-inches topsoil preferred).

The BLM and Division have reevaluated their previous positions/decisions regarding the *clay cap* reclamation plan scenario. We have mutually determined and agreed, that regardless of the capping method ultimately used (i.e., clay, capillary barrier, *Polyrock*, etc.), a minimum 24-inch thickness of plant growth medium (soil cover) will be required above the primary layer selected to cover or seal the tailings.

The final revised surety estimate will not be prepared until Hecla, the Division and BLM reach agreement on the final reclamation design plans for the tailings impoundment. Please contact me or D. Wayne Hedberg of my staff, should you wish to discuss the design requirements as outlined in this letter. We look forward to finalizing this reclamation proposal as soon as possible, so that the impoundment can hopefully be reclaimed next spring.

Sincerely,



Lowell P. Braxton
Associate Director, Mining

jb

cc: Larry Mize, DWQ
Arthur Tait, BLM, Beaver River RA
Minerals staff (route)

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